

The work of our diplomats on the ground though must be backed by high-level support from Washington. On the Niger Delta—or Nigerian affairs in general, for that matter—we have not seen adequate leadership from the Secretary of State or the President. Looking to the next administration, we must re-engage at all levels. This must be a top priority for whoever becomes the next Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and I will work in my capacity in Congress to ensure we give greater attention to the crisis in the delta. We must think creatively about how we can rally our international partners and muster the many resources at our disposal to push for a comprehensive solution. In the months and years ahead, I believe there are few more pressing issues in terms of U.S. security and interests in Africa.

Now is the moment to engage. Just over a week ago, insurgents in the delta declared an “oil war,” after accusing the Nigerian military of new and unprovoked attacks. The 6 days of conflict that ensued between the militants and Nigerian soldiers were the most intense violence the region had seen in years. Reports suggest that oil output was cut by at least 150,000 barrels, but more importantly the violence left hundreds of people killed and many more displaced. I fear that we may only see this situation get worse as all sides, regardless of their rhetoric, cling to military strategies that only further entrench this conflict.

Nevertheless, there is an opportunity here to use this escalation to refocus international attention on this crisis and jumpstart a comprehensive political process to address its underlying causes. In the last month, there have been some positive developments that can be built upon.

First, President Yar’Adua recently announced the creation of 40-person technical committee and an entire ministry for the Niger Delta. If managed well and held accountable, these entities hold the potential to finally deliver on promises for economic development in the delta, especially infrastructure construction and job creation.

Second, the Government has called for the development of a certification scheme to track the theft and lucrative sale of so-called “blood oil.” It is unclear how such a scheme would work or whether the will really exists in Abuja to support it, but this provides an entry point to discuss ways to improve maritime security. A 2005 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies suggested that better surveillance of two river systems alone could make a huge dent in the illicit oil trade in the delta.

Third and finally, it should be noted that Nigeria’s ranking improved in this week’s Transparency International’s corruption index, suggesting some progress has been made. Of course, these rankings are not precise and far more progress is needed.

Mr. President, I realize that this situation is very complex and that many talented and thoughtful people have met over the last decade in various conferences, workshops, and summits to devise plans for peace in the delta. I am not under the illusion that stabilizing this region will be easy or straightforward, but I do know that the United States does not currently have the institutional leadership, resources, or coordination that we need to effectively engage in that undertaking and wield meaningful leverage. As we look ahead to the next administration and Congress, this must change not only the sake of African communities caught in the midst of violence and poverty but also for our own security.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,000, are heart-breaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today’s letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I am worried about our country. The Senate is in a position to do something about it. Currently we are being kicked around by oil interests both abroad and within our boundaries. This must come to an end. [Misinformation is being circulated about energy.] For example, if we drill in new areas in Alaska it will affect gas prices of a penny a gallon ten years from now—this is a ridiculous statement. They have no basis for a stupid statement like that. I believe we need to eliminate importation of oil on principle. It is essential to drill by opening up new fields in Alaska, offshore on Pacific coast, the Atlantic coast, and the Gulf of Mexico. Shell Oil indicates that they can extract oil from shale for \$28 per gallon. Even with government subsidies, I advocate a crash program to start extracting oil from shale and from oil sands in Canada. It requires energy to extract oil from shale. Why not atomic energy to extract that oil? In American Falls, we are trying to get a coal gasification plant. We could use your help in running that through. Potentially this can be a cheap source of hydrogen. American Falls has the potential of truly being in a county of power. There is also the potential of using plant materials for alcohol production. We have an incredible debt. This is a way of solving that debt problem. All things are possible; we have the means to do it. We can solve our energy problems while simultaneously turning America around economically.

JIM, Moscow.

What I want a Senator for Idaho to vote for legislation that will help solve our climate crisis. And a Senator who does not couch his words in terms such as utilizing proven reserves; that means you want to drill in ANWR, right? You are the problem, not the solution.

BUD, Victor.

Thank you for asking for our input on this incredibly important matter. I own and operate a 3,000-acre diversified farming operation in Oakley. I raise potatoes, wheat, barley, corn and alfalfa. I probably do not need to say any more about how energy prices are affecting my operation. Not just fuel alone, but so many other inputs that we depend on such as fertilizer, chemicals, PVC pipe for underground irrigation are going up faster than fuel. In the Idaho potato business, we depend on a national market to stay viable because of our distance from large population areas. The cost of sending a semi-trailer load (450 cwt.) of potatoes to Florida is currently over \$6,000. That is making it far more difficult to compete with the local growers, even though their product is usually inferior to Idaho.

As far as my view of a solution. Drill here and drill now! It is ludicrous and maddening what the liberals has done in curtailing our ability to use our own resources. They are 100% responsible for this mess, and they will pay down the road if they do not realize it soon. As a nation, we are on the verge of an energy crisis that I am not sure we can ever recover from, if it occurs. Their plan to push conservation and tax the big oil companies is simply irresponsible. No one ever saved their way into prosperity. We need to turn the oil companies loose to tap our own reserves and build more refineries, and allow private enterprise to develop new sources of energy.

Thanks again for this opportunity to vent.

RANDY, Oakley.

I ride my bike so my gas price is \$0/gallon. Plus, my pollution impact is non-existent, impact to the roads minimal and impact to my health is high.

MIKE, Boise.

Our concrete and sand and gravel business uses between 30,000 and 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel per month. So our unexpected increase in costs is almost \$500,000 this year. The knee-jerk answer to this problem I hear is “you guys just pass it along to the consumer”. But we have commitments to certain prices on our jobs. Jobs in our industry do not get repriced every night when fuel goes up. So we cannot pass all of the increase along and so profits suffer.

The other side of this is what about the consumer of our products? What does he do with that kind of increase? He is the homeowner, the small contractor, the big contractor, the farmer, or the dairy owner. He takes the hit so we can export our whole productive economy to foreign countries that hate us anyway. How much of this run up is speculation? When the bubble bursts, will the federal government bail out the speculators?

DAVID, Rupert.

I have got a story on energy prices for you. My story is based on fact from the congressional record of Senator Crapo’s voting history.

Once upon a time (in 2007), there was a good energy bill (H.R. 6) that supported the research and development of alternative fuels. (This should have been done a long time ago so the work could have been done ahead of time so it is ready we need it, instead of now when it is an “emergency”, but the Congress did not care about it then.)

There was an amendment to this bill (1505) proposed by Sen. Inhofe that would have given many billions of dollars to the oil companies instead of having that money go to supporting alternative cleaner renewable energy resources. There had already been a history of [giving billions of dollars in tax breaks to the oil companies. I believe that the oil companies have suppressed information on cleaner energy, pollution impact on the environment, and vehicle efficiency technologies through media spin. Senator Crapo says he is a good man and supports cleaner energy sources instead of the oil companies. But when the vote for the Inhofe amendment came up, he voted for it. And the nation lived miserably ever after.]

Seriously, when you go along with the president on such outrageous things as imprisonment and torture of people in secret prisons for indefinite periods without charges filed, suspension of habeas corpus, illegal wiretapping of U.S. citizens without warrants and then giving retroactive immunity to the telecoms for doing it, etc., etc., I find it hard to take seriously your claim that you have the public's best interest in mind. You are voting along with the president's wishes in serious violations of the Constitution. It is against your oath of office, and you should not be doing it.

ROCKFORD, *Boise*.

Historically, the United States has paid less at the pump than all other industrialized nations. Today—with the alleged heinous increases—we continue to pay less than Canada does at the pump (over \$2/liter) and as you know it is from Canada that we get most of our oil. I approve of protecting the environment at the pump.

Thanks for asking

LYNN, *Island Park*.

I support your recent position of the "global warming" legislation that would have resulted in higher gas prices and higher energy costs, in general. I cannot believe that Congress has failed to act on measures to make this nation independent of OPEC's monopoly; we saw the current situation coming way back in the 1970s with long gas lines etc. I am an environmentalist; however, I believe we should responsibly develop all potential oil reserves including off the coasts and in ANWR. This "global warming" hysteria is plain old hogwash, and a lot of players are or will make millions off people's fears. It is a proven fact that the planet and the oceans have been in a cooling state since 1998; the record snowfalls in Idaho this year are testimony. It has been shown that the activity on the sun is far more important than man's activities when it comes to changing climate. Man's activities simply make things worse than they would be naturally.

BILL.

Thank you for taking the time to ask about the people here in Idaho. Recently my husband lost his job. With high gas prices, it has been difficult for him to travel to job interviews. I have had to find a new job, because I cannot afford the 40-minute drive to and from work everyday. My father and mother live in Logan, Utah. My dad has cancer and became very ill last February. He became paralyzed from the cancer, choking off the spinal cord. Luckily, he is recovering very well. But both my parents need help. Unfortunately, with the high gas prices, I have not been able to visit my parents in three months. My family cannot afford to take a vacation. Not even a short drive to Yellowstone Park. With no job for my husband, sky-high gas prices, high food prices, we cannot do anything. My husband may end up taking a job 8½ hours away from us. With

gas prices, we will be lucky to see him once a month. This is a sad realization for me and my three children.

My in-laws and several friends are farmers. Their lives are a struggle. Farmers are talking about selling their beloved farms for housing developments. This will happen is the gas prices do not come down. Then where will we be? There will be no food for anyone. At least, we will not be able to afford the food in the stores. The future is looking bleak for the people in our areas.

Senator Crapo, please do something to help the people of Idaho. Let the Senate know we here in Idaho do not want to lose everything. Help the prices go down; help the people feel they can enjoy life.

KATRINA, *Idaho Falls*.

I am the Director of Career Services at ITT Technical Institute here in Boise. Many of our students are driving from as far away as Ontario, Oregon, to come to our school. Since the gas prices have increased, we are seeing it impact our enrollment level and our drop level. Many of our students would love to take the bus to our campus, but our classes get out at 10:30 at night and there are no busses running late enough to get them home. Why is it we do not have buses that run at least until midnight on all of the major streets in the valley? I know that more people would ride bus if it actually accommodated their work, school, and shopping schedules. How can we get out of our cars, when there are no viable alternatives?

I am a baby boomer taking care of elderly parents. As I age and my parents age, I am more aware of the dangers we face with elderly drivers on our roads. Their reflexes are slower, their hearing is bad, and their eyes are often clouded with cataracts. We need a safe and efficient way of transporting people of all ages around the city.

Our elderly and disabled are often confined to their homes where they are out of our sight. Many of them are living at or below the poverty level. These prices are forcing those who already have cut back on everything to now look at whether or not they can even buy food.

To make alternative transportation even worse, we do not have roads that are designed to accommodate both cars and bicycles. I would actually ride a bike to work, or even walk if their was more than 12 inches between me and the cars that are going 45 miles per hour along side me.

My last word is, drill now in the U.S., and help us to become less dependent on countries that hate us. The entire world is looking to find alternative to gas and we have been trying to find alternatives ourselves since the 70s. We are not the only nation hurting from energy prices. Are we so arrogant that we think we are the only ones who are hurting from this, or the only ones who will solve the problem? Alternatives to gas, is not something that will be solved overnight. We can drill safely and we can do it quickly. We know where it is, all we need to do is drill. So while the world is looking for a solution. Let us drill and improve our public transportation systems.

BARBARA, *Boise*.

I bought this 2004 Toyota pickup when gas hit \$2 a gallon and traded a V8 4 X 4 gas guzzling Hot rod Dodge! I had to trade it for a car when it hit \$4.13 a gallon on June 13, 2008. I have a few friends and relatives that are not so lucky! The dealerships will not take their late model 4 X 4 V8's or Diesels in trade. These aforementioned vehicles are now nearly worthless. In some cases, the owners owe more than twice as much as they are worth.

Drill Drill Drill Build Build Build more refineries. Take the handcuffs off the oil indus-

try. Give huge tax incentive and cut the [rhetoric] about windfall profits.

PERRY, *Meridian*.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the current energy situation in Idaho. The increase in gasoline prices has definitely had an impact upon my family. We are feeling the pinch not only in fuel prices but in the prices of everything we buy. We recently purchased two used three-cylinder cars, a Geo Metro and a Subaru Justy as an attempt to save on commuting costs. Sadly, there does not seem to be anything we can do about our other increasing costs.

We are firm believers in the viability of nuclear power. I believe that we have the solution to most of our energy needs already in hand in the form of nuclear power generation. France and Japan produce 85% of their electricity by nuclear power and neither nation has reported any significant problems. We have the technology and the resources to make it safe and economical. The American masses who oppose the use and expansion of this technology are driven by fears based on outdated information and are led by uninformed or self promoting fear mongers. We need to move quickly to support nuclear technology. We need to expound on the facts and expose the purveyors of false information.

Nuclear power produces far less pollution and has a far safer history than any other type of power generation technology. The waste generated by nuclear power generation can be captured and safely stored in a can until we develop the technology to permanently dispose of it. Can we say the same for fossil fuel-based energy production? No, we spew it out into the atmosphere where it affects everything and everyone. If those who claim that the world is being destroyed by global warming truly believed their own rhetoric they would support the expansion of nuclear power generation. I believe the solution to the so called "nuclear waste problem" could have been developed by now had we continued our research funding and as a result we would not be facing the energy crisis we now find ourselves in.

If you would like additional information with supporting documentation I would be happy to provide it. I am not a nuclear scientist and do not profess to be an expert at all. I only hope to see this viable technology considered as part of our policy to reduce foreign oil dependency.

TIM, *Boise*.

In 2004 my mother-in-law passed away in Filer. My father-in-law was not coping well without his wife. My wife and I live in Soda Springs. We made the decision to have the wife move back to Filer with her dad for awhile. She found a great job in Twin and things were going well so we purchased another home in Twin and she stayed there helping her family. Dad and making much more money with a career in Twin Falls that was not available in Soda Springs. This was fine until last year when fuel started rising. With two homes, double utilities and raising gas prices our weekly commutes of 177 miles between Soda and Twin all but ended. We are in the process of moving the wife back to Soda and renting out the Twin Falls home. Fuel costs and rising costs in general have created a huge hardship for us. With both of our incomes, it is just cheaper to combine in Soda rather than try to commute. With two good incomes, you would think we would be in fat city! We give up a very good income by my wife moving back to Soda. We have almost divorced over this as it has caused so much stress.

My thoughts on energy: I know we have much natural gas and it burns in vehicles

but no infrastructure to utilize it. It is also clean. I also know this country has a huge supply of coal. The Germans refined gas from coal in WW2. The tree huggers and go gooders will never permit it. We need to stop any use of foreign oil as soon as possible. They have us over a barrel . . . no pun intended.

BOB and DIANNE, *Soda Springs.*

I am a disabled 52-year-old man on a fixed income; SSI. I am a past City of Pocatello employee for almost 20 years in the field of law enforcement. I have no retirement and depend solely on SSI income. I was born and raised in Pocatello, worked for the municipality and now struggles to survive. I now stay home or go to medical appointments. I no longer has discretionary funds, not even for gas.

That's my story, and I'm stuck with it.

MICHAEL.

Thank you so much for your honest interest in the everyday Idahoan and the effect that gas prices have on our lives. I do not have a unique story to share with you. I am wholeheartedly in agreement that we need new sources for our energy usage. I believe that we need to drill for oil on our own soil. It would seem to me that there must be ways to do that and keep environmental concerns in mind. I believe that there are things that can be done to make vehicles use gasoline more efficiently; perhaps even run on alternate materials. Public transportation needs updated and should include ways to help all members of our population.

I am very fortunate that my husband and I have jobs that have not been cut due to the recent rise in energy costs, but we are making changes in the way we live our day. I got a job closer to home, we stopped going for evening drives as a form of entertainment, we are not going on a vacation this summer, we combine our errands into one trip, we had a more efficient heating/cooling system installed in our home, and got a more efficient roof. We are doing what we know how to do, as I imagine are most people.

I do want to suggest that docking the oil companies with wind-fall taxes isn't going to help. They will just hike the prices of the gas to cover their taxes. Some creative minds need to be gathered together to help the U.S. get themselves out of the mess they've gotten themselves into. It is time to cut the ties with eastern oil producers. That would seem a much more efficient and strong message than fighting with their countries' leaders. Big oil companies will, no doubt, have to make some changes to the way they do business. We all have to make changes. So many people have lost their jobs. For some people, the cost of gas offsets the income they make by going to work.

I hope these thoughts will be of some help to you. I thank you, again, for working to help all of us.

PEGGY, *Boise.*

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, today I applaud the passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2008, NAHASDA. This act will continue to provide thousands of homes for American Indian and Alaska Native families.

The bill passed today reauthorizes and enhances the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act, NAHASDA, adopted in

1996. The act provides formula-based block grant assistance to Indian tribes, which allows them the flexibility to design housing programs to address the needs of their communities.

The system set up by this housing law has been very successful in addressing the housing crisis in Indian Country, and this reauthorization will go even further in providing homes to thousands of Indian families who desperately need them. Instead of being a one size fits all national program; it provides grants to tribes, allowing them to tailor housing programs to fit their needs. It has already enabled thousands of families to rent and own homes, and now thousands more will have access to much needed housing.

Despite the continued success of NAHASDA, there is still a housing crisis in Indian Country, where 90,000 Indian families are homeless or underhoused. Of those who do have housing, approximately 40 percent of on-reservation housing is considered inadequate, and over one-third of Indian homes are overcrowded.

The legislation passed today will strengthen NAHASDA by providing tribes with increased flexibility, with the goal of producing more homes in Indian Country. The bill will allow funds to be utilized for community buildings such as daycare centers, laundromats, and multipurpose community centers, with the hope of not only building homes but also building communities. The bill also authorizes a study to assess the existing data sources for determining the need for housing and funding programs.

Adequate housing is the first and most necessary step in building a strong community, and many people in Indian Country have gone on for far too long without a roof over their heads. This bill is more than just a housing act—it will give tribes more authority over their own land and truly help build stronger communities in Indian Country.

Mr. President, please allow me to thank Leader REID, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator DODD, Senator INOUE, Senator AKAKA and Senator SHELBY for their commitment in getting this legislation passed.

Thank you to the Senate staff for their hard work on this bill, including Allison Binney, Heidi Frechette, Tracy Hartzler-Toon, David Mullan, Jim Hall, Jenn Fogel-Bublick, and Mark Calabria.

Also, thank you to Representative KILDEE, Representative FRANK, Representative WATT, and their staff, Kimberly Teehee, Dominique McCoy, Cassandra Duhaney, and Hilary West.

Finally, this bill would not have been possible without the tireless work of tribal leaders, the National American Indian Housing Council, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Health Board, and Indian housing advocates.

(At the request of Mr. REID the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.

NASA

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, we have just passed the NASA reauthorization bill. It is noteworthy that next week, October 1, the 50th anniversary of the start of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and if my colleagues will recall, that was 1958. My colleagues may remember what was happening. The Soviet Union had surprised us by putting into orbit the first satellite, Sputnik and America, in midst of the cold war among two superpowers, was absolutely shocked that we were behind in our technology; that we could not be premier. Then, lo and behold, 3 years later, they shocked us again by putting the first human in orbit, Yuri Gagarin, for one orbit when, in fact, we only had a rocket, the Redstone, that could get a human into suborbit. Then we put Alan Shepard and subsequently Gus Grissom in suborbit, and then, in the meantime, the Soviet Union put Titov into several orbits. Of course, the eyes of the world then focused in on Cape Canaveral, when a young marine, one of the original seven American astronauts, named John Glenn, climbed into that capsule knowing that the Atlas rocket had a 20-percent chance of failure. He rode it into the heavens for only three orbits. There was an indication on the instrument panel that his heat shield was loose, and as he started the deorbit burn, John Glenn knew that if that was an accurate reading, on reentry into the Earth's fiery atmosphere, heating up in excess of 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit, he would burn up. It is that memorable time when we heard his last words before he went into the blackout period on radio transmissions: John Glenn humming "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." It is hard to tell that story without getting a lump in my throat.

Of course, what then happened, months before we flew John Glenn, we had a young President who said: We are going to the Moon and back within 9 years. This Nation came together. It focused the political will, it provided the resources, and it did what people did not think could be done.

A generation of young people so inspired by this Nation's space program started pouring into the universities, into math and science and technology and engineering. That generation that was educated in high technology has been the generation that has led us to be the leader in a global marketplace by producing the technology, the innovations, the intellectual capital that has allowed us to continue to be that leader.

So it is with that background that this Senator, who has the privilege of chairing the Space and Science Subcommittee within the Commerce Committee, wants to say: Happy birthday, NASA. We are sending to the House of